Storage and distribution infrastructure for foodgrains

*295. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that foodgrains production in 2001-2002 had been estimated at 211.32 MT, according to the latest estimates;

(b) whether this spells a growth rate of 7.8 per cent over last year's output and would impact favourably the GDP and food security; and

(c) if so, what steps Government have taken to ensure that the growth and development of infrastructure for storage and distribution is adequate, to prevent crores of rupees worth of grain wastage?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI AJIT SINGH) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The Food Corporation of India (FCI) is the main agency which provides the capacity for storage of foodgrains. Besides, constructing its own godowns, FCI also hire storage capacity from other sources such as the Central Warehousing Corporations (CWC), State Warehousing Corporations (SWCs), State Governments and Private Parties. The storage capacity of CWC and SWCs is also utilised for storing other notified commodities like fertilisers, seeds, etc. the total storage capacity available with FCI, CWC, SWCs and State agencies procuring on behalf of FCI or having decentralized procurement is of the order of 87 million tonnes.

With a view of augment existing storage facilities and to introduce bulk handling, storage and transportation of foodgrains in the country, the Government have announced a National Policy on handling, storage and transportation of foodgrains. According to the National storage policy, integrated bulk handling, storage and transportation facilities for a total capacity of 21 lakh tonnes for wheat are proposed to be created in producing and consuming areas through Private Sector participation on Build-Own-Operate (BOO) basis. The Government have also recently launched Gramin Bhandaran Yojana, under a Central Sector Scheme on Construction of Rural Godowns. The scheme envisages new storage capacity of 18.50 lakh tonnes and modernisation of cooperative godowns of capacity 1.50 lakh tonnes.